

REMARKS

The Applicants' below-named representative would like to thank Examiner Dr. John Hardee for the helpful and courteous discussion of the issues in this application held on May 25, 2004. In view of this discussion, the claims of the above-identified patent application are amended to more clearly reflect that the binding agent comprises a result of mixing about 10 wt.% to about 80 wt.% alkali metal carbonate, about 1 wt.% to about 40 wt.% alkali metal bicarbonate, and a sufficient amount of water to react with the alkali metal carbonate and the alkali metal bicarbonate. The substance of this discussion is summarized and further expanded upon in the following remarks.

The invention is directed to a solid detergent composition and to a method for solidifying a detergent composition. The solid detergent composition includes an effective amount of a cleaning agent to provide soil removal and an effective amount of a binding agent dispersed throughout the solid detergent composition to provide the detergent composition as a solid at room temperature. The cleaning agent comprises at least one of a surfactant, source of alkalinity, a water conditioning agent, and an enzyme. The binding agent comprises a result of mixing about 10 wt. to about 80 wt.% alkali metal carbonate, about 1 wt.% to about 40 wt.% alkali metal bicarbonate, and a sufficient amount of water to react with the alkali metal carbonate and the alkali metal bicarbonate. The Applicants discovered that the binding agent can be used to solidify or harden the detergent composition to provide an extruded or cast solid.

The method according to the invention includes steps of mixing the cleaning agent and the binding agent to form a mixture, casting or extruding the mixture, and hardening the mixture to form the solid detergent composition.

The Office Action includes a prior art-based rejection of claims 1, 4-6, 10, 14, 18, 19, and 20 over U.S. Patent No. 5,576,282 to *Miracle et al.* This rejection is traversed.

Miracle et al. fail to disclose or suggest a solid detergent composition or method for solidifying a detergent composition that utilizes a binding agent according to the present invention. Furthermore, *Miracle et al.* fail to disclose or suggest a solid detergent composition or a method for solidifying a detergent composition that provides an extruded or cast solid as a

result of hardening a mixture of a cleaning agent and a binding agent according to the present invention.

Miracle et al. are directed at color-safe bleach boosters that provide "superior bleaching effectiveness in lower water temperatures as well as superior color safety profiles." See *Miracle et al.* at column 1, line 66 through column 2, line 3. *Miracle et al.* additionally disclose a method for laundering a fabric utilizing a bleach booster, a laundry additive, and a bleaching composition. See *Miracle et al.* at column 3, line 49 through column 4, line 53.

The compositions disclosed by *Miracle et al.* are liquids or powders. The Examiner's attention is directed to *Miracle et al.* at column 28, lines 26-36, and column 29, lines 26-30. Furthermore, *Miracle et al.* describe using a spray drying tower and/or a fluidized bed of particulates to provide low density and high density granular compositions. See *Miracle et al.* at column 29, line 66 through column 30, line 49. Clearly, *Miracle et al.* are not directed at providing a solid detergent composition in the form of an extruded or cast solid as a result of a step of hardening according to the present invention. The present invention provides a binding agent that hardens the cleaning agent resulting in a solid detergent composition. The solid detergent composition according to the present invention is not provided in the form of a powder or a liquid as taught by *Miracle et al.*

Miracle et al. additionally fail to disclose a binding agent according to the present invention. The outstanding Office Action refers to *Miracle et al.* at column 12, lines 18+, for the disclosure of builders such as tripolyphosphates, carbonates, bicarbonates, and sesquicarbonates. It is pointed out that although *Miracle et al.* identifies a rather lengthy list of possible builders, there is no teaching or suggestion by *Miracle et al.* to utilize particular builders in a particular manner to provide a binding agent according to the present invention. According to the present invention, the binding agent comprises a result of mixing about 10 wt.% to about 80 wt.% alkali metal carbonate, about 1 wt.% to about 40 wt.% of alkali metal bicarbonate, and a sufficient amount of water to react with the alkali metal carbonate and the alkali metal bicarbonate. *Miracle et al.* fail to provide any teaching or suggestion to utilize a binding agent according to the present invention. Clearly, one skilled in the art would not have looked to the lengthy disclosure of builders by *Miracle et al.* at column 12, line 13 through column 14, line 37 and

picked alkali metal carbonate, alkali metal bicarbonate, and water, in the amounts provided by the present invention, to achieve a binding agent. Furthermore, *Miracle et al.* are not concerned with providing a solid detergent composition according to the present invention. Instead, *Miracle et al.* are directed at providing a liquid or a powder.

In view of the above comments, the present invention is not anticipated and would not have been obvious from *Miracle et al.* Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection over *Miracle et al.* is requested.

The outstanding Office Action states that claims 3, 7-9, 11-13, 15-17, 20, 21, and 23-27 are withdrawn from consideration. It is understood that these claims are withdrawn based on an election of species requirement. Accordingly, it is understood that the claims will be examined once the prior art-based rejection over *Miracle et al.* is withdrawn.

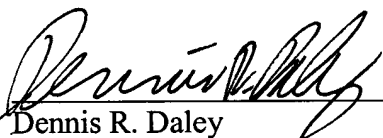
It is believed that this application is in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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